

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8805

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 2678

STADIS//////////

EXDIS

FOR ASST SECRETARY HOLBROOKE

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS: OVIP (KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN)
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE VISIT OF THAI PRIME MINISTER

1. AS XU BEGIN TO PLAN AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S ASIAN VISIT
WITH HIM, I BELIEVE I SHOULD BRING TO YOUR ATTENTION WHAT I
SEE AS THE GROWING PROBLEM OF HANDLING THE QUESTION OF A VISIT
BY GENERAL KRIANGSAK TO WASHINGTON. BY THE TIME AMBASSADOR
YOUNG GETS HERE, I THINK IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE A POSITION--
HOPEFULLY A POSITIVE POSITION-- ON THIS MATTER.

2. THE STATE OF PLAY, AS YOU KNOW, IS THAT PRIME MINISTER THANIN
WAS INVITED FOR MAY OR JUNE. NOTHING HAS BEEN SAID TO THE THAI
SINCE KRIANGSAK CAME INTO OFFICE. MY GUESS IS THAT HE THINKS THE
INVITATION WAS TO "THE PRIME MINISTER OF THAILAND" AND IS STILL
OUTSTANDING. AT THE SAME TIME, I SENSE THAT HE IS PUZZLED THAT
THERE HAS BEEN NO FOLLOW-UP AND HE MAKES NO SECRET OF HIS STRONG
DESIRE TO COME TO WASHINGTON. AT THIS MOMENT, HE IS PLANNING
TO VISIT THE ASEAN CAPITALS IN FEBRUARY AND EXPECTS TO GO TO
PEKING IN MARCH. THAT VISIT IS NAILED DOWN. HE HAS ALSO LET IT
BE KNOWN THAT HE INTENDS TO GO TO MOSCOW. OBVIOUSLY A FAILURE
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TO GET TO THE U S WOULD BE CONSPICUOUS AND EMBARRASSING.

3. THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DAILY "THE NATION" HAD A LITTLE ARTICLE
YESTERDAY SAYING THAT KRIANGSAK HAD BEEN INVITED TO WASHINGTON
BY PRESIDENT CARTER. FRANKLY, I DO NOT THINK THIS IS A TRIAL
BALOON BUT SOME JOURNALIST SIMPLY GARBLED SOME OFF-HAND STATEMENT
ON THE WELL-WORN THEME OF KRIANGSAK'S DESIRE FOR SUCH A VISIT.

IT IS MY HUNCH THAT THE PRESSURE ON THIS WILL MOUNT AND THAT KRIANGSAK, WHO HAS BEEN DIFFIDENT ABOUT RAISING IT WITH OUR RECENT VISITORS, WILL EXPECT AMBASSADOR YOUNG TO BE FAMILIAR WITH THE QUESTION OF HIS VISIT TO THE U S. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN IS THAT HE WILL ALMOST SURELY FISH FOR AN INVITATION IF NOTHING HAS TRANSPIRED BY THE TIME AMBASSADOR YOUNG GETS HERE.

4. MY OWN VIEW IS THAT LEE KUAN YEW AND HUSSEIN BIN ONN HAVE MET PRESIDENT CARTER AND THAT HAVING GONE AS FAR AS WE DID WITH PRIME MINISTER THANIN, WE ARE NOW ON THE HOOK AND SHOULD PROCEED ON THAT ASSUMPTION. AT THIS TIME, THE QUESTION OF A DATE IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN BEING IN A POSITION TO ASSURE KRIANGSAK THAT WE DO EXPECT HIM THIS YEAR AT A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME.
WHITEHOUSE

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